

Indisputable Principles of a Committed Steward

#2 Who Is Your Lord?

Tom struggled to gain control of his home and his college age children, but in attempting to assert authority, he alienated his family and things deteriorated into a control battle. He did not realize that in assuming control, he might be usurping God's role as Lord.

Control is about who will be lord of our lives and homes — who will be in control? As long as we assert control, we deny God His rightful position as Lord. Stewardship is the process of integrating Christ's Lordship into every area of life.

Acts 10:36 tells us that Christ is Lord of all. Paul states that the day will come when "every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:11). In 1 Corinthians 8:6 (ESV), we find "yet for us there is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."

We must face the reality that God is the only one who has the right to be in control, to be Lord in our lives. He must be Lord of all — for if He is not Lord *of all*, can He be Lord *at all*?

This is a constant process, for every issue in life is a matter of who is lord — who will be in control. Here are some critical questions to consider:

- Do you know Jesus as Savior and Lord?
- Have you surrendered control to Him?
- Are you willing to trust the Holy Spirit to guide you?
- Is there an area in your life where you are struggling to follow a clear conviction of the Holy Spirit?
- Who will *you* choose to follow?

Distributed by: Upper Columbia Conference Stewardship Ministries. *Director:* Doug Johnson. *Produced by:* Pacific Union Conference Stewardship Department. *Director:* Gordon Botting. *Design/Assistant Editor:* Carol Lowe.

the Stewpot

A potpourri of practical ideas to help you become a better steward

February 2005
Volume 10, Issue #2

Put Stewardship Into Your Marriage — A Parable

by Darwin Forster*



Once upon a time there was a handsome prince who was the envy of all who knew him. He was gentle and kind and a real friend to those he met. At the ball, one summer evening, he met a beautiful princess who was the most enchanting creature he had ever known. They spent time together and talked and laughed, and it soon became apparent to both of them that they would become great friends.

As time went on, the seasons passed and their friendship grew, and they decided to work together to make their little village the most beautiful in the kingdom. They planted flowers along the streets and in front of every cottage. They placed trees and bushes in just the right patterns to create a beautiful landscape. They spent many hours together fertilizing and watering and nurturing each plant and tree.



Finally it was complete. They stood back and admired, with great pride, the beauty that they had created together. All who saw it exclaimed, "It's the best we've ever seen" and "You certainly have done a wonderful thing." The handsome prince and the beautiful princess were so pleased with their success that they decided to get married and live happily ever after.

By and by . . . , one day while the handsome prince was on his way home from slaying a dragon, he was quite dismayed to see his

Stewardship is a total life-style. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, *relationships*, *spirituality* and finances.

beautiful princess, sitting by the roadside, crying. He went immediately to her side and asked, "Pray tell, what has distressed you so?"

The beautiful princess looked up at him, with tears flowing down her flawless cheeks, and said, "Oh my, just look around you! Don't you see it?"

The handsome prince was puzzled. He looked, but all he saw was the same road he had been traveling each day. Then he looked again, this time more carefully. What he saw made him repel in horror. Their beautiful village, the wonderful thing that they had done together, had changed. Something was wrong. Weeds had begun to grow in the flower beds, and the beautifully trimmed and manicured bushes were overgrown and messy. The trees were dropping their leaves and the grass was dying.

His heart sank with disappointment as he sat down beside her and they wondered what had gone wrong.

It was just at that time that a wise man happened by. "What is wrong?" he asked, "Why are you so forlorn?"

"We worked so hard," replied the handsome prince. "It was so beautiful when we finished, and now it is deteriorating and we don't know what to do."

"I see," said the wise man. "I just may have a solution to your problem."

"It will probably require a miracle," said the handsome prince.

"Oh no," said the wise man, "It will be much simpler than that."

"What then?" asked the handsome prince.

And so it was that the wise man explained to them that it was not enough to plant the flowers and place the bushes and trees in just the right patterns. To insure the continuing beauty of the village would require spending time regularly, removing the weeds, raking the leaves, trimming the bushes, and making sure that everything gets enough water and nourishment.



He explained to them that all living things need a certain amount of attention — they depend upon others who care for them to provide tender loving care on a regular basis. If we ignore a beautiful thing

Give Value to Your Marriage

It is of vital importance that the courtship continues throughout the marriage. Responsible stewardship requires maintenance of the relationship on a regular basis, i.e. reinforcement of the feelings of love, respect, honor and trust that make up the foundation of marriage.

We are used to hearing about our responsibility to be good stewards of the resources that God has given us — usually we associate this with finances or property. But if we believe that our marriage is ordained by God as a gift of great value, then it follows that we should also be faithful stewards of that gift — we owe it to ourselves, our spouses, our families and, most of all, to God. One day, we will hear Him say to us, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21, KJV).

long enough, it soon becomes common and we take it for granted.

The wise man continued by telling them that a marriage is a partnership that inherently endows both parties with the responsibility of stewardship. A steward is one in whom trust has been placed to carefully manage something of value. It is understood that the steward has a moral responsibility to look after the needs and safety of that asset or resource. A moral responsibility is more than a duty or a task; it has a deeper meaning to all parties concerned. In the marriage vows there are promises of love and honor "till death do us part," or other words to that effect. It is common for a marriage to begin at the pinnacle of the relationship. Some regard marriage as the achievement of a goal (which is usually at the end of the quest). And of course, it is a goal, however one that is not the end, but rather the beginning, of a new life together.

The handsome prince and the beautiful princess listened to the wise man's counsel and when he had gone on his way, they made a vow to make time to work together, as they had in the beginning, to keep the village beautiful and to keep the wonderful thing that they had created. *The End*

** Darwin Forster is retired and works part-time as a health screener for the Northern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*